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NSC BRIEFING

4 May 1960

SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL SHIFTS

- I. Several shifts have occurred recently among Soviet military high command personnel:
 - A. Marshal Matvey V. Zakharov replaced Marshal Vasili D. Sokolovsky as Chief of Staff of the Army and Navy.
 - B. Replacement of Marshal Zakharov as CinC Group of Soviet Forces, Germany by his deputy, Colonel General Ivan I. Yakubovsky.
 - C. The possible replacement of Marshal Ivan S. Konev as the Chief, Warsaw Pact Military Forces by either Marshal Andrey A. Grechko or Marshal Vasili I. Chuykov.
 - D. Replacement of Marshal Chuykov by General Petr K. Kozhevoy as the Commander, Kiev Military District.
- II. Most significant change was Zakharov's promotion, which jumped him over several senior officers.
 - A. Although Soviet spokesmen have implied that Sokolovsky was relieved for reasons of health, Zakharov, at 62, is only one year younger than Sokolovsky, and reportedly is a diabetic.
 - B. Zakharov can be considered as a protege of Marshal Malinovsky (Minister of Defense), having served under him on two tours. While GSFG Commander, Zakharov earned the respect of subordinates and Western opposite numbers for the vigorous, effective manner in which he carried out his mission.
- III. Some of changes may be related to Khrushchev's demobilization scheme.

DOCUMENT NO. 8

NO CHANGE

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CLASSIFIED

GROUP 1

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- A. As early as 19 January, Khrushchev stated reduction had not been easy to sell to military components.
- B. Since then have been articles in Soviet military press castigating unidentified commanders for not cooperating with party decisions and reasserting principle of party primacy. Will be conference of Army political activists in Moscow this month to deal with the question.
- C. Objections to reduction could be on two levels:
 - 1. Resentment at abrupt termination of careers of many military professionals.
 - 2. More importantly--disagreement with strategy of putting too many eggs in missile/nuclear basket.

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